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SUBJECT: U.S. AMBASSADORS FUND FOR CT -- PROPOSAL FOR KHARTOUM

REF: STATE 20081

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Below is Embassy Khartoum's submission for the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Counterterrorism. The proposed project would take place at the Spring Youth Center in Omdurman, the historic capital and working-class hub of the Khartoum metropolitan area. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) BACKGROUND: Many of the factors known to breed extremism are prevalent in Omdurman, including high levels of poverty, population density, unemployment, and youth under 25. Local press reported in February 2008 that pro-Al-Qaeda graffiti was scattered throughout Omdurman. Within the last year, one extremist Islamic terrorist cell attacked and killed an American USAID officer and a local USAID employee, and other individuals were discovered in August 2007 while attempting to make a bomb for terrorist purposes. Though Sudan continues its cooperative commitment against terrorism with the United States, it is well known that infamous terrorists such as Osama bin Laden and Carlos the Jackal all sought refuge and operated within Sudan in the 1990s. END BACKGROUND.

¶3. (SBU) NAME OF PROPOSED PROJECT: Omdurman Community Adolescent Athletic Outreach (OCAA).

¶4. (SBU) CONTACT OFFICERS: Eric Barbee (BarbeeEM@state.gov) and Walter Braunohler (BraunohlerWM@state.gov).

¶5. (SBU) PLANNED START DATE: August 15, 2008.

¶6. (SBU) ESTIMATED TOTAL COST: USD 42,500

¶7. (SBU) POTENTIAL SUPPLEMENTARY SOURCES OF FUNDING: Donations from American soccer associations and major soccer equipment suppliers. In-kind donations from the youth center and its volunteers.

¶8. (SBU) TARGET AUDIENCE FOR PROJECT AND DESIRED EFFECT ON AUDIENCE PERCEPTIONS: Adolescent boys ages 13-17 (approximately 250 direct participants in an 8-week tournament), with approximately 500 weekly spectators. In addition, there will be the enormous multiplier effect of newspaper, radio, and television media coverage. With the help of local police and religious leaders, in addition to national sports heroes, young participants will be encouraged to reject extremism.

¶9. (SBU) PROJECT METHOD: Inform, persuade, develop.

¶10. (SBU) TASKS AND ACTIVITIES: The core of the program is a 10-week soccer and basketball tournament, held weekly at the Spring Community Youth Center in Omdurman, Sudan. Each week, guest speakers will conduct a "time out" presentation before or after each game focusing on anti-extremist messages, highlighting values of moderation, tolerance, and pluralism. Local police commissioners, mosque leaders, and other community leaders (including sports celebrities) have all agreed to participate in this program. The Head of Protocol at the Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Sports Director at the Ministry of Youth, Culture, and Sports have both approved of this program. At the end of the program, an awards

ceremony for the competition's winners will be held and a pamphlet highlighting each week's guest speaker message will be delivered to all participants.

¶11. (SBU) EXPLANATION OF HOW THE PROPOSAL WILL ENHANCE THE ABILITY OF LAW ENFORCEMENT ORGANIZATIONS TO DETER TERRORISTS AND TERRORIST GROUPS: This project will afford local law enforcement direct access to a vulnerable youth population and will enable them to establish a better relationship with influential religious, political, and community leaders. This program will empower these credible voices and give them a chance to network with other community leaders while giving at-risk youth alternative activities to extremism. The strength of this program is in its community focus, the weekly repetition of anti-extremist messages, and in the positive reinforcement that athletic competition can provide.

¶12. (SBU) The Spring Youth center is an ideal location for this program. The physical grounds of the youth center are enclosed, allowing for control of participation and monitoring of visitors. While continuing high levels of programming, the grounds and equipment show signs of wear and decay. After years of constant use, the basketball backboards and nets are on the verge of disintegration. The soccer field, once green grass, is now a dusty pitch. The youth center would truly notice and appreciate the small injection of funds, attention, and resources that preparing it for a series of events would require. Small additions such as new goalposts and basketball hoops would go a long way in improving the facilities. Most importantly, the Embassy has already successfully conducted outreach events to the center in the past and has a good working relationship with it. Suheil Ghandour, an extremely active volunteer at the center, is extraordinarily pro-American, having spent a significant amount of time in the U.S. The youth centers' leaders have good relations with local police and religious leaders and have enthusiastically recruited their participation as we have developed this proposal.

¶13. (SBU) MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS: Numbers of youth directly participating, spectator attendance, media coverage, new relationships forged between law enforcement, religious leadership, community leaders, and political figures.

¶14. (SBU) PLAN TO DISSEMINATE BEST PRACTICES, IF APPROPRIATE: Following the program, a comprehensive assessment and evaluation of the project will be conducted by the Embassy in coordination with the youth center.

¶15. (SBU) Pictures of the youth center and a spreadsheet detailing the breakdown of estimated costs will be e-mailed to Emily Goldman (GoldmanEO@state.gov) and Aldray Aiken (AikenA@state.gov).

FERNANDEZ